Remarks/Arguments

Further to the Amendment filed by applicants on December 17, 2007, in response to the official Action mailed June 18, 2007, applicants submit the present Supplemental Amendment for entry in the above-identified case. In the Official Action mailed June 18, 2007, the examiner rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,708,162 to Hillbig et al and claims 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,071,462 to Matsunaga.

In the present Supplemental Amendment, applicants have amended the claims which, when considered with the following distinguishing remarks, is believed to place the present case in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of all the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In accordance with the claimed invention, it was discovered that the depolymerization reaction could be greatly accelerated by adding base to the CMC/depolymerization reagent mixture in a single step. In fact, the reaction was so quick that there was no need for the stepwise/alternate addition of CMC and depolymerization reagent to the reaction mixture. Accordingly, the claimed invention relates to a process of making a low viscous **solution** by **dissolving a polysaccharide in water** and adding a basic depolymerization reagent or a depolymerization reagent and a base to the reaction mixture in a single step. Thus, applicants' process is directed to making a "solution" and the polysaccharide starting material must be water soluble. The claims in the present Supplemental Amendment have been amended to more accurately describe the metes and bounds of the invention.

Support for the present claim amendments can be found at page 4, last paragraph of the present application, on to page 5 of same.

The aforementioned claim amendments are believed to clearly distinguish over the process of Hillbig, et al. More particularly, Hillbig et al. speaks in terms of utilizing a

"suspension" rather than a "solution". See, for example, col. 3, lines 36-46 wherein Hillbig et al. states

> "The present invention relates to a process for the preparation of low molecular weight polysaccharide ethers by controlled oxidative degradation of relatively high molecular weight polysaccharide ethers in suspension (e.g. in a slurry), which comprises initially introducing the relatively high molecular weight polysaccharide ether in suspension (e.g. in a slurry), adding a perborate as the oxidizing agent (optionally in combination with a perborate activator), and carrying out the oxidative degradation at a temperature of between 25° and 90°C., preferably between 50° and 80° C."

See also col. 5, lines 9-13 where Hillbig states

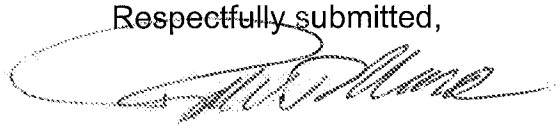
> "The suspension media used are advantageously those which have been employed for the preparation of the polysaccharide ethers in suspension. The polysaccharide ether suspension can be relative thin and watery, if desired, as in the case of a slurry."

Therefore, whether or not water is a major or minor component of Hillbig's reaction medium, it is clear that Hillbig utilizes a suspension of a polysaccharide ether and consequently the polysaccharide ether is not soluble in the applied medium. Thus, applicants are claiming the preparation of aqueous solutions , while Hillbig describes a process for obtaining isolated depolymerized polysaccharide ethers made by a suspension/slurrie process.

In view of the foregoing and of the amendments and remarks submitted in the Amendment filed by applicants on December 17, 2007, applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are not rendered unpatentable by either Hillbig et al and/or Matsunaga. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections.

Therefore, in view of the amendments and remarks herein, the present claims are believed top be in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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